DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 219 500 CE 032 364

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TITLE Aristotle Said It First.
PUB DATE [78]
NOTE 10p.; Not available in paper copy due to light, broken print.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Curriculum Development; Curriculum Problems; Educational History; *Educational Needs; *Leisure Time; Postsecondary Education; *Problems; Program Development; *Program Improvement; Recreational Activities; Secondary Education
IDENTIFIERS *Leisure Education

ABSTRACT

Ever since Aristotle, educators have stressed the need for education for the worthy use of leisure time. Problems with individual and societal perceptions, teacher preparation and attributes, and curriculum organization, however, have prevented meaningful leisure education programs from becoming a reality. The major barrier to effective leisure education may well be the individual students, the target population and their lack of comprehension of the concept of leisure. In addition, society's work ethic carries over into private life and prevents leisure from being seen as a positive value. Another problem preventing effective leisure education is the lack of teachers who have the proper attributes and who have been educationally prepared for the task. Finally, the reason for the failure of leisure education programs may be inappropriate curriculum design; e.g., equating leisure education with physical education instead of emphasizing life-long physical activity; or failure to instill in the student leisure awareness, values and skills. Educators agree that, with predicted increasing availability of leisure time, leisure education should be a required component of American education, and a viable part of the curriculum. To become that, however, several things are needed: a clear perception of the meaning of leisure, adequate teacher preparation, and a meaningful curriculum. (KC)

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The objective of educating for the worthy use of leisure time is perhaps one of the oldest of the many objectives of American education. Readers of the ancients are aware that Aristotle stated, "The aim of education is the wise use of leisure." [1]

Those that have little faith in the relevance of the ancients to modern day issues may relate to more recent leaders of educational thought. In 1916 John Dewey stated, "Education has no more serious responsibility than making adequate provision for enjoyment of recreative leisure not only for the sake of immediate health, but still more, if possible, for the sake of its lasting effects upon the habits of the mind."[2] Philip Phenix in Education and the Common Good stated in 1961, "Recreation is a proper educational concern, and the nurture of recreational capacities is a part of the teaching task."[3] He also states, "If modern man can learn to use his free time well, he will live well generally, for the employment of leisure is a measure of selfhood. Thus, when recreation is rightly conceived, it is a suitable major guiding concern for education as a whole."[4] Charles Brighthill in 1966 stated, "Almost all disciplines already have been drawn into the leisure milieu. It is incumbent upon those disciplines which revolve around human relations and human ecology, particularly those professions upon which a large responsibility for the well-being of humanity rests, and to which people respond, to concern themselves with the professional aspects of education for leisure." [5] The literature of the 1970's supports these authorities and others that there is a definite and increasing need for leisure education and that the needs of the 70's are placing even a higher priority on this objective of education. Yet, the reality is that little has been accomplished in the implementation of leisure education programs within American education. It has yet to be made a viable part of the curriculum in the majority of American schools. What is it about leisure education that makes it so difficult to implement? What are the problems with respect to individual

and societal perception, teacher preparation and attributes, curriculum organization, that have prevented meaningful leisure education programs from becoming a reality.

The major barrier to effective leisure education may well be the individual students, the target population, and their lack of comprehension of the concept. A problem may be that leisure is a hard word to define. It has often been described as a "weasel word", a word hard to pin down. Yet even if the concept is defined clearly it may still be hard to perceive and relate to the individual's life activities. To some, leisure may be nothing more than a myth. Harold Lehman suggests, "It does not seem time is as abundant as some think."[6] Technology even with all of its advances, may not be the great emancipator it is claimed to be. Lehman suggests that the advances in technological productions may mean that more time is being spent by consumers in maintenance and upkeep. It may, also, mean that consumers more intensely become involved in family responsibilities and community activities. Due to the influence of the dominating work ethic Americans look at and approach their non-work time from the basis of work values "carrying into leisure the aggressiveness and drive required for productivity and consequently miss leisure contributions and thus wonder what happened to leisure time."[7] Americans, consequently, do not recognize the value of leisure as a time to reflect on life and as an opportunity to participate in recreative, enriching pursuits - those indulged in for the sake of relief of modern day pressures and insight development. Leisure is still too out of step with the work ethic and too much symbolizes idleness.

In order to attack the issue of the misunderstanding of leisure those disciplines directly concerned, including education and recreation, must be able to define leisure and interpret it to the masses to get them to participate in leisure education. It is necessary for people to understand both the positive and negative aspects of leisure. "Leisure can build; it can destroy. It can provide

satisfaction and fulfillment; it can bring emptiness and frustration. Leisure can be fun; it can bore us. Leisure can free; it can condemn."[8] People must be made cognizant that in true leisure there is an absence of obligation and freedom from the responsibilities of work, family and community. In its truest sense it is disengaged from useful, commercial and ideological purposes. It is a time devoted to personal fulfillment and the satisfaction of ones own needs, which with freedom of choice, may compliment the needs of his significant others. To quote Joffre Dumayedier, "It can open up a world of self-transcendence characterized by joyful feelings of freedom, fulfillment, and significance."[9]

The task then is to provide a clear understanding of the meaning of leisure. A definition which many feel may be the most appropriate and applicable today is one offered by Max Kaplan. "Leisure can be said to consist of relatively self-determined activities and experiences that fall into ones economically free-time roles, that are seen as leisure by participants, that are psychologically pleasant in anticipation and recollection, that potentially cover the whole range of commitment and intensity, that contain characteristic norms and restraints, and provide opportunities for recreation, personal growth, and service to others."[10]

It has been suggested that one of the obstacles to effective leisure education may be the inadequacy and mindlessness of those attempting to teach. Perhaps school administrations being painfully aware of such inadequacies have been reluctant to approach the task. Just as not every teacher can teach mathematics, biology, English, and history so it is that not every teacher can assume responsibility for leisure education. What then are the characteristics necessary? First of all, the teacher must be able to relate leisure to his own life and be able to convey a sense of relevance to his students. The teacher must understand and appreciate the true significance of leisure and demonstrate this to the student by his own leisure activity. Yet, the teacher must refrain from imposing his specific leisure pursuits upon the students.

All of this has definite implications with respect to teacher preparation. Teacher education has over the past few years been criticized as being irrelevant. What could be more relevant than preparaing teachers to guide others in the beneficial use of their leisure? The relevance was made obvious by Alexander Reid Martin in 1975 when he stated, "Economists testified that the next fifteen years will see a four to five-hour working day, a twenty-two hour workweek, a twenty-seven workweek year, and retirement at thirty-seven or some combination of these patterns."[11] These facts are indeed alarming and education must implement appropriate teacher education programs to meet the consequences. Education must consider its obligation to adequately prepare students for living in a predominately leisure society. To meet this obligation higher education may have to develop a leisure education curriculum and methods of selecting and screening students to participate in and benefit from such a curriculum. This is one alternative. Another may be to consider the incorporation and modification of academic programs in recreation leadership to prepare the recreator for classroom roles by instilling specific instructional skills relating the traditional instructional areas to leisure life. This may be the most immediate and economic approach for several reasons. Most, if not all, recreation students have been forced to formulate their own philosophies toward recreation and leisure. Secondly, they have through their course work learned the meaning of leisure and recreation. The recreation student is aware that what is a meaningful leisure experience for one may not be for another and that it may encompass the full range of mental and physical activities from the lowest to the highest levels of purpose and intensity. The recreation student is aware that the very foundations of our culture may well rest on the worthy use of leisure.

Regardless of the alternative chosen, there are some personal qualities necessary for an individual to function as a leisure educator. Those in higher education need to be aware of these qualities if they are genuinely concerned.

with producing teachers adequately trained as leisure educators. Brighthill outlines these qualities in his text Educating for Leisure - Centered Living. They are:

1) Creative imagination disciplined with common sense.

2) Intellectual capacity stimulated by intellectual curiosity.

3) Initiative and resourcefulness bolstered by energy and diligence.

4) Personableness and personal confidence tempered with humility.

5) Breadth of vision strengthened by depth of human understanding.

6) Aesthetic sense coupled with functional appreciation.

7) Professional commitment minus a provincial outlook.

8) Courage, conviction, and determination balanced with sensitivity and consideration.

9) Critical insight buttressed by an ability to think, analyze, and decide.

10) Unified sense of direction backed up with principles and standards, but with a capacity to adapt, adjust, and change. 12

All of these are important, but it is essential that the leisure educator be creative, flexible, analytical, and aware of the economic and sociological dynamics which play a role in determining leisure attitudes and interests.

Finally, the reason for the failure of leisure education programs being implemented may be inappropriate curriculum design. First of all, in many instances leisure education programs are confused with physical education programs where the primary emphasis is placed on the activity itself with little emphasis on life-long activity. Leisure education has been mistreated in that the emphasis has been on youthful activity and sports instead of the need for family and home, mental and community service activity. Little thought has been given to relating activity to individual needs.

A meaningful leisure education curriculum should have four major concerns if it is to accomplish its task -- preparing the student to live in a leisure

dominated society. First of all, the curriculum should be designed to instill in the student leisure awareness and values, which denotes an appreciation of leisure as it related to his own psychological, social and economic situation. Secondly, the curriculum should deal with the development of necessary social or interpersonal skills required for leisure interaction. The individual if he is to use his leisure to maximum benefit must know how to function in groups of all sizes and be able to withstand the pressures experienced through cooperative and competitive interaction. This may require an inverted pyramid instructional approach subjecting the student to experiences ranging from the low to high level personal, solitary experience to the low to high level large group experience. This is where analytical skills are essential. The teacher must be able to ascertain individual functional levels. Tertiary, the curriculum should be concerned with specific leisure activity skills. The teacher should have the sources, his own or through other teaching staff, to provide instruction in a wide range of activity areas. These should include sports, arts, outdoor activities, home and family activities, community activities, mental activities and fitness activities. To be successful, however, the student needs to learn more than simply the mechanics of these activities; he also needs to acquire an appreciation for the activities. Finally, if the student acquires the leisure awareness, values, appreciation, the social skills, and the activity skills, maximum benefit cannot be derived unless he knows the how, where and when. Specifically, the student must have the knowledge to locate and select resources. He must know what the activity opportunities are at all levels in his life - personally, family, community, state, and nationally. These are the four basic content areas; there may be others some could suggest. Yet, without these a program of leisure education cannot hope to fulfill its task.

In summary, an overwhelming majority of educational leaders agree that American education has the responsibility of educating American youth for life in a leisure dominated society. Also, most agree that leisure education has yet

to become a viable part of the curriculum. It can become just that, however, with a clear perception of the meaning of leisure, adequate teacher preparation, and a meaningful curriculum. The educator need not carry the full burden, however, in that other disciplines have valuable input. Recreation, rehabilitation, sociology, and psychology are all concerned with quality leisure life. Yet, due to facility availability and student access education must assume a leadership and coordinating role.

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